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THE TOPIC OF THE MONTH.

THE RUSH TO THE KLONDYKE GOLD-FIELDS.

THE news of the discovery of a gold-field of immense wealth on the rim of the Arctic circle has thrilled the Old World and the New with a touch of the delirium which raged so fiercely in the veins of the Europeans in the sixteenth century. "Westward Ho!" that marvellous historical romance of Kingsley, which has this year fallen out of copyright, and has been issued in the Penny Novels of the Masterpiece Library, recalls somewhat of the fascination which led so many Englishmen in the days of Good Queen Bess to abandon home and country in the search for El Dorado, that golden land which the Spanish adventurers had discovered in the New World. This time the golden magnet is situated in the other extremity of the Western continent. It is no longer in Mexico or Peru, in regions baked and blistered by the tropical sun, that the precious metal has been unearthed, but far away at the other extreme, in the North-west territory of the Canadian Dominion, within one hundred miles of the border of what used to be Russian America before the Tsar sold his American backyard to the Government of the United States. But cold or heat makes no difference. The attraction of gold is proof against the utmost severity of the climatic extremes, and the rush to Klondyke has not been in the least tempered by the fact that the miners must spend their lives in a region where the thermometer ranges 60 or 70 degrees below zero in winter, which lasts eight months of the year.

From the *New York Journal*.]

OFF TO KLONDYKE.

One of the questions with which the Americans amuse themselves by putting to the visitor from Europe is, What is the name of the city which lies nearest the centre of the possessions of the United States on the American continent? Most Englishmen will guess at anything between Chicago and Denver, but the right answer is San Francisco. This, paradoxical though it seems, is geographically correct; and the fact serves to bring into clear relief the immense western extension of the American possessions due to the purchase of Russian America. If two lines are drawn between the extreme eastern and the extreme western points of the American continent, over which floats the Stars and Stripes, the middle line will be found to pass not very far from the capital of the Pacific Slope. Hitherto this little joke has been one of the few assets which the Americans had to show for their investment in that north land of desolation.

The discovery of gold has, however, in the Alaskan region changed everything, and made that forlorn wilderness the centre of public interest. For some time past gold mines producing as much as a million dollars a year in gold have been worked on the Alaskan side of the boundary. The famous Treadwell Mine was but one among many whose yield attracted attention to the auriferous deposits of those remote lands. Klondyke, the scene of the latest gold rush, although lying a clear hundred miles within British territory, nevertheless belongs to the same auriferous region; and it is quite possible that, when the country comes to be properly prospected and surveyed, gold-fields rivalling those of Klondyke may be discovered on American territory. At present, however, the centre of attraction is in the North-west territory of Canada. In this case, fortunately, there is no frontier dispute, as in the case of the gold-fields of British Columbia, which lie further south. The latter dispute, however, is now in a fair way of being settled by arbitration, so that we have at least the consolation of hoping that the gold of the far West will not add to the difficulties that threaten the good relations of the Empire and the Republic. If any difficulty should arise, it is more likely that it will proceed from the influx of the great American contingent which may make Dawson City an American Johannesburg, but there is no fear of the Canadian Government playing the part of Oom Paul. So far the Americans, with few exceptions, appear to be full of admiration at the way in which the Canadian Government has dealt out thoroughly even-handed justice at this remote extremity of the Dominion. There is difficulty enough in the task where the executive power has to rely on policemen, whose normal salary is a dollar a day, with which they are expected to be content, while any man worth his salt is able to make ten or twenty times as much as that by hiring himself out in the mining country. Still, notwithstanding this difficulty with which the Colonial authorities in Australia have often been confronted, the Canadian Government has done, and is doing, its best to maintain law and order, and to uphold civilised authority in the midst of the wild and stormy passions which abound in every mining camp.

Gambling, says a recent visitor, is rife in Klondyke, but gambling has always been the best test of the prosperity of a mining camp. Such a community, composed of the most energetic and self-reliant pioneers encamped far away from the range of all the appliances of modern civilisation, without one woman per hundred in the whole crowd, without even daylight for more than three hours a day for half a year, can hardly be regarded as a hotbed of human virtue. If the Canadian Government can succeed in maintaining law and order amongst the miners, it will have done more than the United States Government ever succeeded in doing in the great days when the mineral wealth of the

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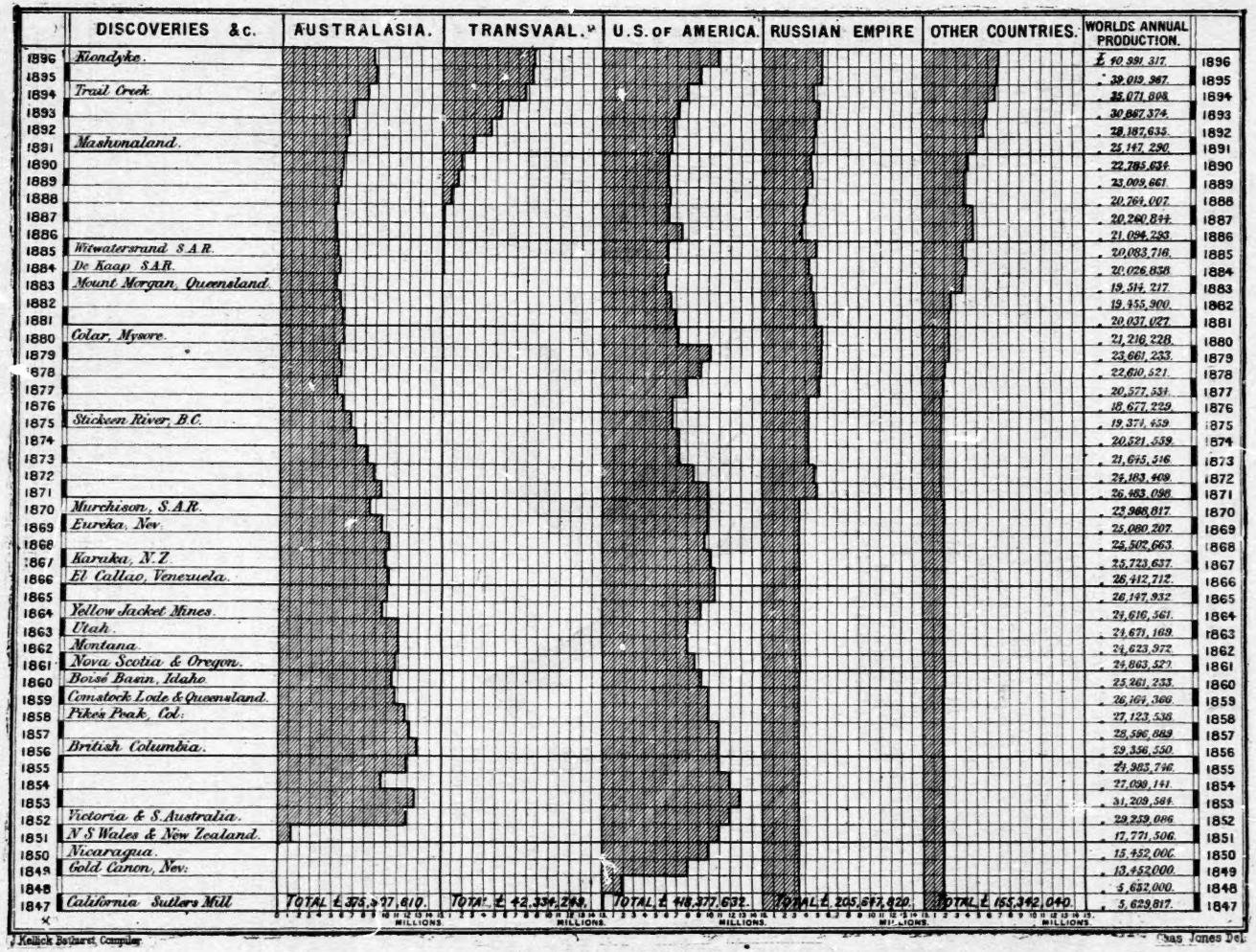

J. Kellock Bothwell, Compiler. Chas. Jones Del.

THE WORLD'S OUTPUT OF GOLD.

COMPILED FOR THE "REVIEW OF REVIEWS" BY THE COMPARATIVE SYNOPTICAL CHART CO., LIMITED.

THE WORLD'S OUTPUT OF GOLD.
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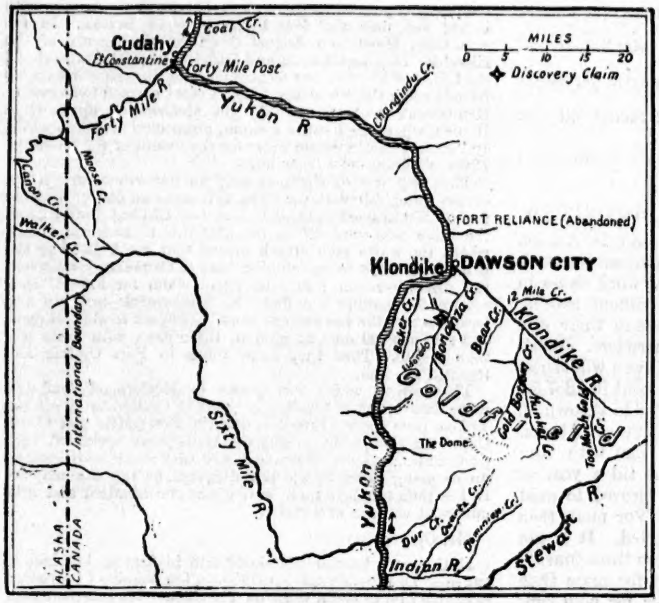

THE KLONDYKE GOLD-FIELD.

Rockies was first displayed to bewilder and intoxicate the world. Even to-day Cripple Creek in Colorado, where there is but a small community of five thousand persons, has a record for homicide which need not shrink from comparison with that of any of the camps founded by the 'Forty-Niners. According to the recent statement of the Coroner, Cripple Creek with its scattered population has furnished material for seventy inquests per annum on victims to violence during the last four years. So far the Canadian Government appears to have enforced the same conditions as at the mines at British Columbia, and has relieved all new-comers of their rifles and revolvers. The temptation to shoot is always stronger when you have shooting-irons handy, and the confiscation of all firearms undoubtedly tends to diminish the risk of murder.

All witnesses agree in two things: first, that the Canadian Government does its work admirably, disarming the miners, and dispensing even-handed justice between man and man; and secondly, that the general character of the miners is immensely superior to that of the Argonauts of 1849. Joaquin Miller, indeed, who is now on his way to Klondyke, as one of the representatives of the *New York Journal*, maintains that, as a loyal American, he must give the credit for the good behaviour of the miners not to the Canadian Government but to the character of the American with whom the authorities had to deal. As Joaquin Miller at the moment of expressing this opinion had not been to Klondyke—for he was writing on board a steamer filled with miners *en route* to the gold-fields—this must be taken as a natural expression of American patriotism rather than as the utterance of a competent authority. He says:—

There is a wide difference, both in bearing and dress, between the gold hunters of old and those on this boat. For example, I have not seen a single pistol yet. I have counted some twenty rifles and shotguns, and speaking to a friend about the absence of guns, I think from what I can gather that most of the gold-seekers aboard have no more arms than myself, although my friend hints darkly that "all may be armed to the teeth." All I can say is, you do not see any display of arms, as of old. A miner of to-day looks more like a bicyclist than a booted and crimson-shirted Argonaut. And there seems to be no drinking. I have not as yet heard an oath or bad language of any sort, not even bad grammar. But the adventurers are all young men as of old. I, in the middle fifties, am perhaps the oldest man by some years in all our "four hundred."

The steamer which carried Joaquin Miller took with it also an ex-Governor of California and many other notable men who were going north to try their luck, but it is idle to hope that all contingents of pioneers will be up to this standard. Every mining camp attracts, as an irresistible loadstone, its fair share of that Lost Legion of which Mr. Rudyard Kipling sings in the ballad dedicated "To the legion of the lost ones, to the cohort of the damned," that wholly unauthorised horde—

"There's a Legion that never was 'listed,
That carries no colours or crest,
But, split in a thousand detachments,
Is breaking the road for the rest."

But among those who rush to Klondyke, it cannot be said that there are many "who have done with hope and honour, who are lost to love and truth, who are dropping down the ladder rung by rung"; for although all this may be true enough of the gentleman ranker, in one respect at least it does not apply to the men who are rushing to Klondyke, for however they may fail in honour, love, and truth, hope glows within them inextinguishably, even through the gloom of the Arctic nights. It is hope, hope of making a great pile, and then being able to live ever afterwards without working, which fires the heart of those adventurous migrants. As "Tompkins," the bard whose Cockney muse so often enlivens the columns of the *Daily Chronicle*, has sung:—

Come ter the plice where they've got it right, come where the treasure's 'id,
Where a 'at-full of mud is a five-pun note, and the clod on yer 'eel is a quid,
Where yer scratches the soil and it tumbles art, as much as yer 'ands can 'old,
Where the 'ills above and the plines beneath is bulgin' an' crackin' with gold.

Klondike! Klondike! Libel yer luggidge Klondike!
Theer's no chawnce in the street ter-dye,
Theer's no luck darn Shoreditch wye,
Pack up yer traps an' be orf, I sye,
An' orf an' awye ter Klondike!

Lots o' chaps they 'as stawtid smal', and awterwuds struck it rich,
Barght their kerridges, siled their yachts—nutthink's too good fur sich—
Awmies o' servants, miles o' land, cuttin' the toppical art,
Bran-noo paliss to knock Park-line, then . . . *whart was I thinkin' abart?*

Klondike! Klondike! chinge the subjic' ter Klondike! etc.

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Lots o' chaps they 'as stawtid small, and finished it smaller yet.
An' the gold as yer warnts ain't got fur nix twixt 'ere an' 'ell, yer bet;
Froze ter death, or stawved ter death, or shot in yer tracks yer'll lie,
Fur one 'ull pick an' come 'ome agen, but twenty 'ull pick an' die.

Klondike! Klondike! It sticks ter its own, does Klondike! etc.

II.—HOW THE GOLD-FIELD WAS DISCOVERED.

It is an old story that there was gold in Ala ka. The Russians worked mines in their American territory a century since, working them as they work those in Siberia to-day, with fair success, but without making much fuss over their finds or advertising their discoveries in such a way as to attract intruders. When the United States Government bought this vast wilderness of snow and ice from the Russian Government in 1867 for £1,500,000, they of course got the gold-fields thrown in with the rest of the undeveloped wealth of Alaska. After a time they began mining, and met with considerable success. It was, however, not till a year or two back that the rich gold-fields were proved to exist on the British side of the boundary. For more than a dozen years their existence was suspected. It is not easy prospecting for gold in regions where three-fourths of the year there is midnight darkness for more than three-fourths of the day; but the hunger for gold kept the pioneers of mining industry prowling up and down the River Yukon and its tributaries in the constantly deferred hope that some time somewhere they might strike gold.

Among these adventurous men, Scotchmen, whether of North Britain or of Nova Scotia, appear to have been well to the front. When the North Pole is discovered, a Scotchman will be found squatted on the top of it; and it is thoroughly in keeping with the national character that the latest great gold-field should have been discovered by a Scotchman, George McCormack by name, who entered into and completed the prior discovery of a Nova Scotian, Robert Henderson. According to the story of Joseph Ladue, the man who owns the ground-rents of the city of Dawson, the capital of Klondyke, which is confirmed by the report of William Ogilvie, chief of the Canadian International Boundary Survey, the first claim was located in Bonanza Creek by McCormack in August, 1896. The original discovery was due to reports made by Indians as to the gold deposits in the Klondyke country, who, it is well to note, report that still richer deposits are to be found further up. They say that there is a creek up country where the gold is thicker than the gravel, and they have appropriately named it "Too-much-gold Creek"; but that creek has not yet been explored. Ladue's story of the discovery of the Klondyke field is as follows:—

It was on August 24th, 1896, when Robert Henderson, of Nova Scotia, who had been prospecting for four years in Indian Creek, a tributary of the Yukon, found himself in another little stream bed known as Gold Bottom, near the Yukon, the high water having driven him out of Indian Creek. He was prospecting around, hoping to find something as good. After a time he panned out a little gold and put in a sluice box or two. In a very short time he ran out of supplies and went back to Fort Ogilvie, where I was stationed, and reported the find to me. I lost no time getting myself in readiness to proceed to the spot at once, and by August 28th I had two men and four horses in Gold Bottom. In the meantime, Henderson drifted down to the mouth of the Klondike in a small boat, and found George McCormack, an old friend of his, who was fishing for salmon. Hunting up his friends when there was anything in sight seemed to be one of Henderson's best traits. He got McCormack up to Gold Bottom, where he located a claim, prospected around a while, and started back across country for the mouth of the Klondike River, a distance of twenty miles.

That trip was destined to play an important part in the events which followed, for through it occurred one of the big finds. McCormack took with him two Chilkat Indians, and the three men went off in the direction of Bonanza Creek, where the white man struck gravel that went $2.50 to the pan. According to our mining laws in Canadian possessions, the discoverer can locate an extra claim for himself as a reward for making the find. So McCormack took up two locations and the Indians one each. They set to work at once, and took out 120 dols. in gold in three days with little else than a pan. Then they came down to Fort Ogilvie and reported the find.

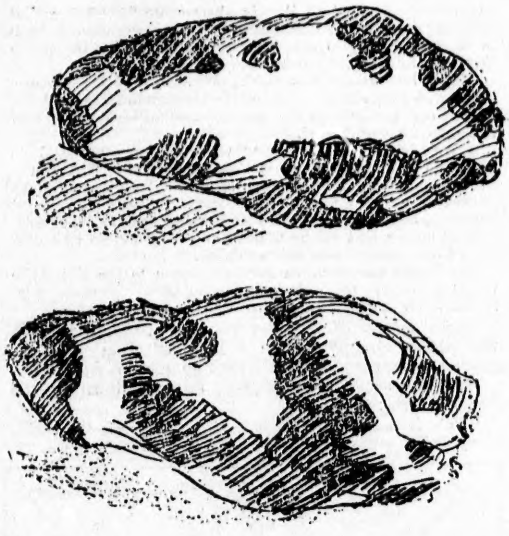
That report, which was spread by McCormack, had the immediate effect of sending a thrill of excitement along the Yukon, from the headquarters down to Forty Mile and Circle City. As though by magic, the trails were sprinkled with pack mules, and the river was dotted with small craft coming up or going down to the new diggings, as the case may be. In less than ten days there were about one hundred and fifty miners at work on new claims.

Mr. Ogilvie says:—

McCormack located his claim late in August, but had to cut some logs for the mill here to get a few pounds of provisions to enable him to begin work on his claim. He returned with a few weeks' provisions for himself, wife and brother-in-law (Indians) in the last of August, and immediately set about working his claim. The gravel itself he had to carry in a box on his back from thirty to one hundred feet. Notwithstanding this, three men working very irregularly, washed out 1200 dols. in eight days.

After this the rest was easy. If it were known that gold lay in heaps under the North Pole, the Pole itself would be colonised in twelve months. The great magnet began to draw first from the other side of the Yukon, and then from all the territory round about. This year it swept within range all the population of the Pacific Slope, and in the years which are to come there is no territory, no matter how distant, which will not feel the pull of the great golden loadstone. The Americans are naturally first to take advantage of the discovery that has been made almost at their doors. Bret Harte, in his "Arctic Vision," predicts that the "awful Yankee," whom he hails as "the real northern Thor," will expectorate his tobacco juice on the drifted snow that covers the gold deposits of Klondyke:—

Where the short legged Esquimau
Waddles in the ice and snow.
And the playful polar bear
Nips the hunter unaware.
Where by day they track the ermine
And by night another vermin.
Segment of the Frigid Zone
Where the temperature alone
Warms on St. Elias' cone;
Polar dock, where Nature slips
From the ways her icy ships,
Let the news that flying goes
Thrill through all your Arctic floes,
Till the tidings circling round
Every bay of Norton Sound,
Throw the vocal tide-wave back.



A NUGGET FROM EL DORADO CREEK.

Actual size. Gold worth £31 8s.

[*The white indicates the gold.*]

III.—HOW THE GOLD GOT THERE.

The geologists have been busy explaining how it is that there is gold in the valleys of the Klondyke creeks, The Klondyke river is marked on some maps Tondak and this is nearer to the right pronunciation of the Indian name. The Indians called the river the Thron Duick, or Plenty of Fish; for the Klondyke, like many other streams in the far north-west, is famous for its salmon. The Klondyke enters the Yukon from the east, and its tributaries drain the region that lies north of Mount Elias, a famous landmark in the wilderness of mountains which has been the starting-point of the great glaciers which flowed north to the Yukon and south to British Columbia. Somewhere between the south side of Mount Elias and the Yukon there must lie the original mother lode of gold, stored up in the quartz rock, of which the gold found in placer deposits is but as the dust on the fringe. To locate the mother lode will be for years to come the modern nineteenth century Western world substitute for the search for the Holy Grail. It is there where the heart of the gold miner finds its goal. All these nuggets in the placer deposits are mere samples of the original treasure-house of the hills.

The deposit of gold dust and of gold nuggets in the bed of the Klondyke creeks is due to the operation of very simple causes. Man in his mining but follows the processes of nature. By hydraulics he pours a blast of water upon the rocky mountain side, breaking away the auriferous stone which, when it is washed down, he pounds fine with stamping mills, and then extracts the gold by passing the powdered produce through streams of water, which carry off the lighter earth, allowing the heavy particles of gold to fall to the bottom. All this which man does in his restless hurrying fashion in the course of a day, Nature does calmly and continuously in the course of ages. Her mill never stops. The storm-wind, the snowstorm, the driving rain, the forked lightning, are her machinery by which she detaches the rocks from the hills, and hurls them down to her stamping mills. These mills, the glaciers, grind slowly indeed, so slowly that their motion is imperceptible; but though with patience God stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all. The glaciers, with a weight of millions upon millions of tons of viscous ice, grind the rocks to powder as they move slowly down the valleys, and not content with doing so, they carry the remains of their milling down to the foot of the hills. It is not travelling by express speed—rather *à petite vitesse* indeed, this system of transport by glacier; but Nature, who is never economical, is never in a hurry, and in due season the pounded, comminuted, pulverised fragments of the auriferous rocks torn from the mother-lode hundreds of miles away are dumped into the streams which act as sub-distributors of the gold. When Nature wishes to carry gold any distance she packs it on the back of a glacier, for when it is trusted to the swifter transport of the stream and the torrent, its weight causes

ONE PAN = £119.

Actual size of bottle.

Panned by W. Ogilvie.

the gold to drop through the fingers of her carriers and accumulate in pockets in the river bed. There in time, after ages and ages, Nature seals it up in her treasure chest, converting the gold deposit and the sand in which it lies and the pebbles and gravel of the river bottom into solid stone, conglomerate or pudding stone, which occupies an intermediate place between the dust and nuggets in the placers and the mother-lode.

But as the world is ever in the making, and Creation never stops, the streams are still dropping gold-dust from their heedless fingers into the pockets of their channels, and still the heavy gold nugget, glacier crushed, sinks down into the gravelly bottom, awaiting such time as Nature will seal it up again in her mighty safe of petrified conglomerate. In the placer deposits on the Klondyke man has tapped the gold stores before they have been, by the slow process of the ages, locked up in Nature's pudding-stone safe. They are comparatively recent, and represent the most modern results of the constant milling and mining which Nature carries on in the hills and valleys that stretch in rocky chaos from the snow-clad summit of Mount Elias to the broad waters of the Yukon.

IV.—HOW MUCH GOLD IS THERE IN KLONDYKE?

All you miners wide awake!
Go to the Klondyke; make your stake.
Get out your pick, your pan, your pack,
Go to the Klondyke; don't come back.
Ho, for the Klondyke, ho!

There's gold enough for you and me
On the hills and the plain, wherever you be,
And it's yellow, and rich, and heavy as lead,
But half of the truth has never been said.
Ho, for the Klondyke, ho!

No man there has ever been broke,
And there's gold enough for the women folk
And the nights are short when the days are long;
So pack your tools and sing this song:
Ho, for the Klondyke, ho!

Chorus.

Ho, for the Klondyke,
Ho, for the Klondyke,
Ho, for the Klondyke, ho!
Put on your pack
And don't come back
Till you fill your sack
On the Northwest track.
Ho, ho, for the Klondyke, ho!—*New York Journal.*

The yield of last season at Klondyke is estimated at a million sterling. This year the Canadian authorities estimate it at double that sum, and as yet the gold-field has but been scratched. This year a single vessel brought down a ton of gold dust. The miners returning with sacks of gold dust, and cans full of nuggets, brought back stories of a gold-field three hundred miles long, out of which they had only been able to glean samples of its wealth. The effect on the popular imagination was, however, due rather to the reports of individual fortunes than to the imposing totals of miles or millions. Here are a few of the tales which sent the Pacific coast crazy:—

A miner by the name of Alex MacDonald took out £19,000 from a forty-foot patch of ground only two feet thick. He employed four men to do the work and consumed but twenty-eight days. That gravel went £50 to the pan, and was in claim No. 30, El Dorado Creek.

Different men have cleaned up from £35,000 to £10,000 in fine gold, and all of it was done during three months of the past winter. Out of El Dorado alone came £800,000, and at least £200,000 from Bonanza Creek. How much more there is in it is impossible to say, but to all appearances the whole district is full of gold waiting to be taken out.

A man last winter was discharged as a deck-hand from a steamer on Puget Sound. He made his way to the Klondyke, worked seven months in the summer, and returned to civilisation with £30,000 in gold.

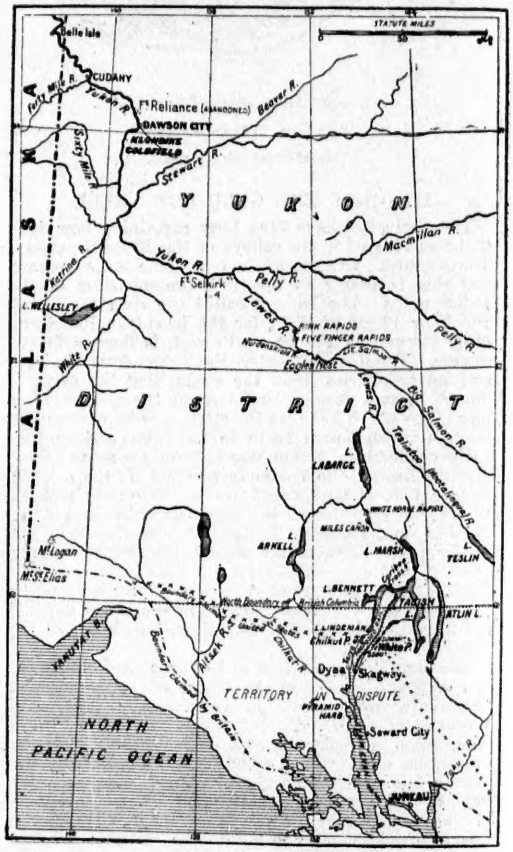
A grey-haired old newsagent who had no money and no prospect of getting any in his business in Seattle, left for the goldfields. He was as "great a greeny," to use his own phrase, as ever set foot in the country. After some months' hardship, he took up claims on El Dorado Creek in September, and by spring had taken £23,000 out of two holes which, in his opinion, still contain half a million.

Mrs. Boyce who went on her honeymoon to the Klondyke would go out to the dump and poke about for gold. She found £1200 in less than a year.

These stories of fortunes won by greenhorns made the Klondyke appear like a kind of Tom Tiddler's ground, where any one could pick up gold all day long.

Here are some of the reports brought down by the lucky miners:—

"This is probably the richest placer known in the world. They took it out so fast, and so much of it, that they did not



THE ROUTE TO KLONDYKE.

have time to weigh it with gold scales. They took steelyards, and all the syrup cans were filled."

"I believe there is gold in every creek in Alaska. Certainly on the Klondyke the claims are not spotted. One seems to be as good as another. It's gold, gold, gold all over. It's yards wide and yards deep. I say so, because I have been there, and have the gold to show for it. All you have to do is to run a hole down, and there you find plenty of gold dust. I would say that our pans on the El Dorado claims will average 3 dols.—some go as high as 150 dols.—and, believe me, when I say that in five pans I have taken out as high as 750 dols., and sometimes more. I did not pick the pans, but simply put them against my breast and scooped the dirt off the bed rock."

"The country is enormously rich. The present gold diggings are only a very small part of it, and there is little doubt that there are millions only waiting for miners to come and dig out."

"I realise that you will perhaps doubt all I say of the richness of the pay streak, but here is what I actually saw. At the bottom of one cave I counted five five-gallon cans filled with coarse gold and nuggets. This was the work of two men during the winter, and the pay dirt on the dumps was but half worked through.

"Two million has been washed out to date, and many of the dumps are not being touched now, their owners finding it difficult to get men to work them for wages at 15 dols. per day.

"Some of the saloons here take in 300 dols. per day in dust and nuggets. Beer is 50 cents per drink. I have quit drinking."

These things read like the story of Aladdin, but fiction is not at all in it with facts at Klondyke.

Men with only £3,000 were spoken of as poor fellows who were down on their luck.

Five policemen who left the force for the mines have just returned with an average of £8,000 apiece.

There's millions in it!—millions on millions; and so every one is off to grab a share of the millions before the precious hoard is exhausted. For this is not, as in the Transvaal, or in other mines where the private adventurer can do nothing because of the heavy cost of mining plant. Here the private adventurer can do everything—find the gold, work it, and bring it away. The value of the placer gold in the Klondyke cannot be estimated. But experts speak of £14,000,000 as being practically within sight.

STEAMER LEAVING SAN FRANCISCO FOR KLONDYKE.

V.—HOW TO GET THERE.

Fare to Seattle over the Northern Pacific	£13 11s.
Tourist sleeper, fare	£1 16s.
Pullman sleeper	£3 12s.
Meals, in dining car	£3 12s.
Tourist meals at stations	£1 16s.
New York to Seattle, in miles	3,160
Number of days en route	7
Steamer, Seattle to Juneau, with cabin and meals	£15
Fare, with berth	£13 10s.
Miles, Seattle to Juneau	1,000
Number of days, Seattle to Juneau	3
Cost of living in Juneau, per day	8s.
Steamboat, up Lynn Canal to Healey's store, miles	100
Number of days to Healey's store	1

Cost of complete outfit, with provisions for one year . £120
Price of dog and sled outfit . £100
Last steamer from San Francisco, August 30.
Days sailing from Seattle — Mondays and Thursdays.
Total distance in miles . 5,000
Total days required for journey . . 90
Best time to start—April 15.

The above is from the *New York Journal*,—which has despatched a special expedition to Klondyke,—with the dollars and cents converted into £ s. d.

Any one going to Klondyke may choose his route. He can go either by the American lines to Seattle, or by the Canadian-Pacific to Vancouver. After having reached the Pacific, he has no choice of alternative route until he reaches Juneau. He can get out at Juneau if he pleases and travel overland, crossing the Chilkoot Pass and following the line of the rivers and lakes northward to Klondyke; or he can go round about 2,500 miles to St. Michael, and entering the Yukon river, make his way by steamer to within a comparatively short distance of the goldfield. Mr. Harry de Windt described the route from Juneau in the *Times* as follows:—

The difficulties of this voyage are only realised at Dyea, 100 miles from Juneau, where the land journey commences and where a bad anchorage frequently compels the traveller to wade knee-deep for a considerable distance before landing. Dyea consists of a rude log store and a movable town of tents occupied by diggers bound for the goldfields. A delay of several days occurs here while Indians are procured to carry

From the *Chicago Inter-Ocean.*]

CANADA'S IDEA OF GETTING THERE.

tents and baggage to the lakes 24 miles distant over the Chilkoot Pass, nearly 4,000 feet high. Provisions must be brought from Juneau, for there is nothing to be had here, or indeed anywhere this side of Forty Mile City, 600 miles away.

The Chilkoot Pass is difficult, even dangerous, to those not possessed of steady nerves. Towards the summit there is a sheer ascent of 1,000 feet, where a slip would certainly be fatal. At this point a dense mist overtook us, but we reached Lake Lindemann—the first of a series of five lakes—in safety after a fatiguing tramp of fourteen consecutive hours through half-melted snow. Here we had to build our own boat, first felling the timber for the purpose. The journey down the lakes occupied ten days, four of which were passed in camp on Lake Bennett during a violent storm which raised a heavy sea. The rapids followed. One of these latter, the "Grand Cañon," is a mile long, and dashes through walls of rock from 50 to 100 feet high. Six miles below are the "White Horse Rapids," a name which many fatal accidents have converted into the "Miner's Grave." But snags and rocks are everywhere a fruitful source of danger on this river, and from this rapid, downward, scarcely a day passed that one did not see some cairn or wooden cross marking the last resting-place of some drowned pilgrim to the land of gold.

Joaquin Miller, when on his way to Klondyke before he reached the Chilkoot Pass, scouted the idea of there being any serious difficulty on the road:—

The formidable and fearful Chilkoot Pass or glaciers of so many slippery miles in the clouds of frost and snow has dwindled to twenty-four miles of reasonably rough mountain trail by the old route to the head-waters of the river, where we take to the boats, rafts, and canoes, and make our way by water down to the Klondyke mines. What is most important, we find they have opened a new route on, or, rather, around this pass; that it is only from thirty to forty miles by this new route to the canoes and boats; and what is more important than all, this route is possible for horses.

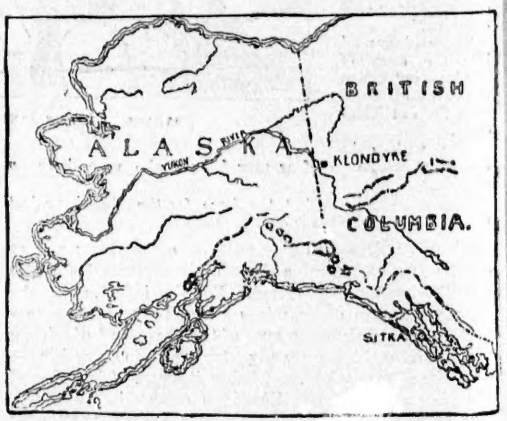
This new route of which Joaquin speaks passes through the White Pass, which is 1,000 feet lower than the Chilkoot and is lumbered the entire length. It starts from Skaquay Bay, 85 miles from Juneau, from whence it is proposed to make a railway 350 miles long, striking the Yukon River 100 miles below Lake Lindemann. The Grand Cañon and the White Horse Rapids will be tunnel by a road and rail postage. The trail over this new pass was to have been completed so as to be serviceable for horses and mules last July, but in August the new route through which most of the traffic was to pass into Klondyke was still closed, with little prospect of being opened this year. By the Chilkoot Pass it took Mr. and Mrs. Boyce just three months to travel from Juneau to Forty Miles. They travelled ten, or twelve, or fifteen miles a day, the dogs would not stand more.

The sea journey along the fjords of the coast is very fine. Joaquin Miller, whose "Songs of the Sierras" showed that he had the poet's eye for the secret of the Hills, was enraptured by the splendour of the scenery through which the mining party steamed from Seattle to Juneau:—

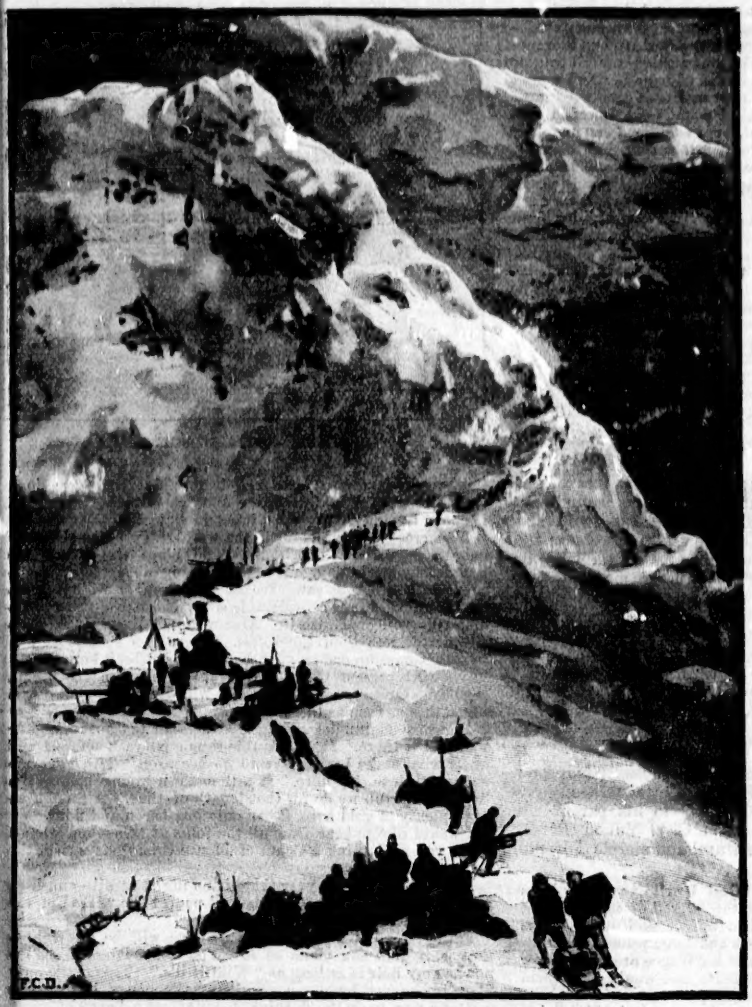
We are steaming up a mighty gorge, a vast, still river, wide and dolorous, deep, as one might imagine the river of death. Not a sound, not a sign of anything at all save the croak and shifting of our own ship, or now and then a splash of a young salmon breaking the glassy surface of the great river. It is simply a great view, the greatest of tide views, it seems, from Seattle up to this point in the heart of South Alaska—a thousand Hudson views, with peaks and palisades set and encircled with everlasting snow.

All the day that is behind us the snow peaks and black forests of Prince of Wales Island lifted like the Sierras between us and the Pacific, a continuous and unbroken chain. To the right snow and clouds lighted up the bleak steeps and peaks, and blazed as the sun battled for supremacy as in some majestic dream—awful, fearful as not of earth. One needs to coin new words, words that are brighter, bigger, keener, than common words to describe even a single day in Alaska.

Even now, long past 10 p.m., the tired and vanquished sun reaches a sword of silver through the black fires to the west,



THE SITUATION OF KLONDYKE.



ON THE WAY TO KLONDYKE.
The Summit of the Chilkoot Pass.

and at last lies silently along the still waters at our feet in sign of reluctant surrender.

It is after they land at Juneau that the trouble begins. Mr. Ladue, founder of Dawson City, thus describes the trip:—

Leaving Juneau, you go to Dyea by way of Lime Canal, and from there to Lake Lindermann thirty miles on foot, or portage, as we call it. The lake gives you a ride of five or six miles, and then follows another long journey overland to the headwaters of Lake Bennett, which is twenty-eight miles long. On foot you go again for several miles, and then the caribou crossing of the river furnishes transportation for four miles to Tagish Lake, where another twenty-one mile boat ride may be had.

This is followed by a weary stretch of mountainous country, and then Marsh or Mud Lake is reached. You get another boat ride of twenty-four miles, and then go down the creek for twenty-seven miles to Miles Canyon and to White Horse Rapids.

This is one of the most dangerous places on the entire route, and should be avoided by all strangers. The stream is full of sunken rocks, and runs with the speed of a mill race. Passing White Horse Rapids, the journey is down the river for thirty miles to Lake Labarge, where thirty-one miles of navigable water is found. Another short portage and Lous River is reached, where you have a two hundred mile journey, which brings you to Fort Selkirk. At this point Pelly and Lous Rivers come together, forming the Yukon. From that point on is practically smooth sailing.

From which it will be seen that a long and dolorous way intervenes between the miner and El Dorado, even after he has set foot on the shores of the Promised Land.

The load which each miner carries with him varies according to means and capacity. Joaquin Miller, who may be regarded as an expert capable of reducing his impedimenta to an irreducible minimum, carried with him the following kit:—

I have twenty pounds of bacon, twelve pounds of hard tack, half a pound of tea. I have a heavy pair of blankets, the heaviest; socks, underclothing, boots, a rubber blanket, a macintosh, a pound of assorted nails, one hundred feet of small rope, a sail and an axe. My pack is forty pounds all told. I have a pocket-knife and an iron cup, a thermometer, and about 100 dols.

I hope to build a raft, carry my own pack over all the places, and travel hastily on ahead and alone. You see, I have spent years alone in the mountains, and have been in almost all the "stampedes" for the last forty years, and know what I am about.

If that be the minimum equipment for a forced march, here is what may be regarded as adequate provision for a well-to-do miner for twelve months in Klondyke. It is an interesting table of the needs of the civilised human when encamped on the rim of the Arctic circle. The total cost of the outfit only comes to £44:—

PROVISIONS.—75 pounds granulated sugar, 1 dozen packages beef extract, 10 pounds evaporated onions, 50 pounds evaporated potatoes, 50 pounds evaporated peaches, 10 pounds evaporated currants, 25 pounds salt, 25 pounds rolled oats, 50 pounds cornmeal, 200 pounds breakfast bacon, 50 pounds rice, 1 pound Cayenne pepper, 1 pound black pepper, 1 case condensed milk 10 sacks flour, 1 bottle vinegar, 15 pounds dried beef, 1 case baking powder, 1 pound mustard, 1 box candles, 1 can matches, 20 bars of soap, Crackers, Castile soap, 1 dozen small cheeses, 25 pounds spaghetti, 15 pounds coffee, 3 pounds tea, 100 pounds beans, 25 pounds of pitted plums. Total cost of provisions at Seattle, £21.

CLOTHING.—Three suits underwear, one undershirt, one Yukon blanket, one summer blanket, one dozen pairs socks, two pairs mittens, one cap, one bag, two overshirts, one jumper, one pair gum boot socks, two pairs rubber boots, two pairs leather shoes, hobnailed. Total, £15 6s. 4d.

TOOLS AND COOKING UTENSILS.—Forty pounds wire nails, five pounds pitch (for caulking boat), one whip saw, one caulking chisel, two pounds tallow (for caulking boat), two wedges, one handsaw, 250 ft. ⅝-inch manilla rope, one compass, one knife and sheath, one pack strap, one brace, one shovel, one pick and handle, two buckets, one coffee-pot, hooks and lines, one stove, one piece sheet iron, one revolver, belt and cartridges, one gold pan. Total, £8 5s.

Besides these supplies, each traveller has a case of medicine that cost 38s.

To get to Klondyke with supplies for a year it is estimated the miner should have a capital of from £200 to £250. Not an ounce of bread or bacon could last August be purchased at any of the trading posts on the road to Klondyke. Yet thousands pressed on without provisions into the lone north land. If many do not perish of starvation it will be a marvel. There is no game to be had. A few hundred natives maintain a difficult existence in thousands of square miles of desolation so extreme that a missionary and his wife reported that they could not live together during the eight months' winter, for the presence of two fresh mouths to fill in any settlement would entail famine.

VI.—HOW THEY LIVE IN KLONDYKE.

The best account I have seen as to the actual conditions of life in Klondyke was contained in a letter written by a young miner of the name of Connelly to his parents in Nebraska. It is dated "Dawson City, Yukon River, April 4th, 1897," and it is so natural and simple I quote it in its entirety:—

Dear Mother and Father,—At last I write you a few lines to let you know where I am—in the "Land of the Midnight Sun." I left Juneau, Alaska, last Winter, and was 100 days coming to this place with five dogs and 1,000 pounds of grub.

This is the best place in the world. Wages are 15 dols. per day. I have a few thousand dollars, and would send them to you, but there is no way of doing so.

The man who takes this letter will carry it in his pocket 1,000 miles, to Juneau, Alaska. He starts to-night for the outer world.

Mother, gold in this place is no good—grub is the thing. Bacon sells for 2 dols. per pound, and flour 60 dols. per sack. I will come home in two years with money to keep us all the rest of our lives, if I have my health.

There were four in our party when we left Alaska. One died and we brought him 700 miles on a sled. We work dogs here as you work horses and cattle in Nebraska.

This is a wonderful country. The Winters are cold—60 to 80 degrees below zero. We have three short Summer months to work in. From June to the last part of September. There is no night the most of the Summer, but in the Winter we have scarcely any sun. On Christmas Day we only have about three hours of sunshine.

I have bought a claim for 9,000 dols., paid 2,000 dols. down, 7,000 dols. to be paid at bedrock. This is Winter digging; the ground is frozen forty feet deep. We drift as we do in coal mines, put a fire in the base and let it thaw, then shovel it out in Summer. We wash it out in sluice boxes.

ON THE WAY TO KLONDYKE.

This creek is the richest in the world. Two men shovelled out 18,000 dols. in two hours. The place was struck last August by an Indian. The worst thing about this place is there is nothing to eat. We have nothing at all but bacon and flour. There is considerable scurvy here, one-third of the men being affected with it. A man cannot live in this place a year for less than 1,000 dols. There is a steam boat that usually comes up once a year, but it has not been here for two years. At present there are about 700 men in the Yukon country. Quite a number of these will depart from here with big stakes as soon as the boat comes.

I gave a man 2 dols. to take this letter to Juneau, and he will post it there. It will be this time next year before I will know what stake I will have to go home on. Three years is enough time to stay here. It will make a young man old to live on the grub we do for that length of time. Although we have plenty of gold here, it can only buy bacon and flour.

I would like to hear from all the folks at home, and when I come you will think a Count of Monte Cristo has struck the town.

At this time of the year there is no night at all—sunshine for eight straight days. It is well named the "Land of the Midnight Sun."

Father, keep up a little longer and we will be all right—that is, if gold can make us so. You would laugh to see me now, as my hair is as long as "Wild Bill's." This is the only place in the world where a man can make money, but it takes a strong man to do it. I think I could eat a barrel of fruit. A man came here this spring with a lot of eggs and sold them for 75 cents apiece. If mother were here with her hens she could make a fortune. Well, I will bring this letter to a close. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am your loving son,

TIM CONNELLY.

There is the reality of things as they are. We also have a woman's account of life at the camp in the interview with Mrs. Boyce, the bride who spent her honeymoon in Klondyke. I quote the salient passages from her narrative for the sake of the woman's view of things which it affords:—

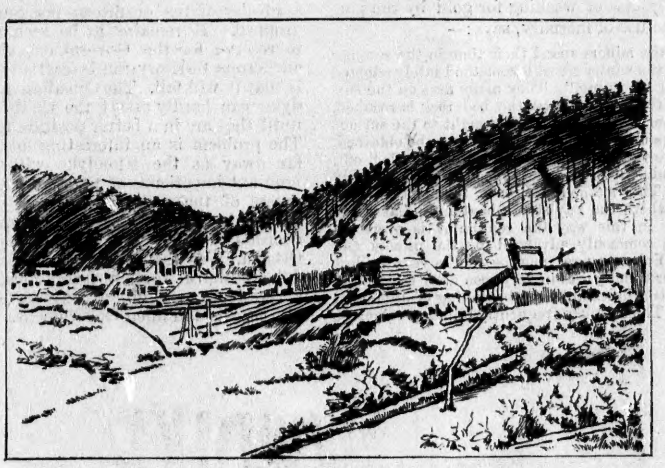
What advice would I give to a woman about going to Alaska, she said to-day, why, to stay away, of course. It's no place for a woman, I mean for a woman alone; one who goes to make a living or a fortune. It's much better for a man though, if he has a wife along.

The men are not much at cooking up there, and that is the reason they suffer with stomach troubles, and, as some say they did, with scurvy. After a man has worked hard all day in the diggings he doesn't feel much like cooking a nice meal when he goes to his cabin cold, tired and hungry, and finds no fire in the stove and all the food frozen.

I took an outfit of clothes made especially for the trip. My outfit cost about 250 dols. It included three suits of everything right straight through. I had very heavy woollen underwear and knitted woollen stockings. My skirts were made short, only a little below the knee. I had a heavy fur coat of martin, a fur cap, fur gloves and the heaviest shawl I could get. Strange as it may seem, furs cost less and are better here than in Alaska.

A fur robe is necessary. The fur gloves can be had up there better than here, however, and cost about 3 dols. Moccasins are worn instead of shoes through the winter, and mucluc when it is thawing and wet. They are both to be had there at from 1 dol. to 4 dols. or 5 dols. a pair. The moccasins are made of fur seal, "with the furry side inside and the inside out."

The mucluc—that's the native name for them—are the mud moccasins. The soles are made waterproof with seal oil. If a woman keeps her feet warm her health is pretty safe, and for that reason, in addition to the woollen stockings and moccasins, I wore also flannel insoles. In all the time I was in Alaska I never suffered from frostbite—didn't even get my fingers nipped or my nose—and I wore no veil all the time I was there. The supplies for Mr. Boyce and myself included his clothes, my small furs, our stove and all our food; cost about 800 dols. and weighed about two thousand pounds. We did not confine ourselves to a bean and bacon diet. We had plenty of canned meats, hams, bacon, dried fruits, and vegetables and all sorts of canned things besides.



A VIEW OF KLONDYKE.

It took us three months to travel from Juneau to Forty Mile. At night we pitched our tents, made a bed of boughs, put blankets on, rolled ourselves in blankets, covered ourselves with the fur robes, and slept well. We had four pairs of heavy blankets, and I took two small pillows along.

Our bedding was always packed in an oil-skin cover, and so kept dry all the way. We got to Forty Mile in June, and went to the Klondyke in October. I stayed at the post, now Dawson City, while the boys went on to build a cabin. It took us two days to walk the nineteen miles to the diggings. There was about an inch of water on the ice, and I slipped and slid in every direction going over.

When I got there the house had no door, windows, or floor, and I had to stand around outside until a hole was cut for me to get in through. We had a two-room house, and after it was fixed up it was very comfortable for Klondyke. The boys had a carpet and curtain sent over for me. We had all the canvas-made furniture we needed, and with a bed of long, little sheet-iron affairs, with two holes on top and a drum to bake in. The wood is so full of pitch—it's the meanest, knottiest, scrubbiest wood I ever saw—that the fire burns up and goes out if you turn your back on it for a minute. The water we used was all snow or ice, and had to be thawed. If any one wanted a drink, a chunk of ice had to be thawed and cooled again.

When we wanted a bath we melted ice, heated the water, got the pan in that we used for washing the gold, and did our bathing in that. I was not sick once during all the time I was there, except slight indispositions, and I'm twenty-five pounds heavier now than when I went up, and feel better than ever.

Eight months of the year it is dark up there, with only about four hours' light each day. There is a grey twilight, and the men work through that, but we often had to light the lamps at half-past one or two in the afternoon. We had oil lamps, but the majority use candles.

In the winter the Yukon is one of the healthiest places for any one going there with sound health, but when the summer comes it is unhealthy. It is damp, the water is bad, it gets very hot, and the mosquitos are awful.

Coming away from the mines we made the distance between them and Dawson in one night, but the trail is so bad that, notwithstanding I wore a skirt only knee length, I was covered with mud to the waist. Dawson may have been a quiet city once, but when I came through it it was in such a rowdy state that it was impossible for me to go to my meals, and I had to have them sent to me. Men and women—there were about fifty women there—were carousing continually. The people who followed on the heels of the good steady-going, hard-working miners are among the worst up there.

Would I go to the Yukon again? Never. I am glad I had the experience I really did. It was worth the roughing, but once is enough.

The mean temperature of Klondyke for the four seasons is as follows: Spring, 14·22; Summer, 59·67; Autumn, 17·37; Winter, 30·80 below zero.

VII.—HOW THE GOLD IS WON.

The manner in which mining is carried on in Klondyke is thus described by Dr. W. H. Dall, one of the Curators of the National Museum at Washington:—

The yellow metal is not found in paying quantity in the main river, but in the small streams which cut through the mountains on either side. These practically wash out the gold. The mud and mineral matter is carried into the main river, while the gold is left on the rough bottoms of these side streams. In most cases the gold lies at the bottom of thick gravel deposits. The gold is covered by frozen gravel in the winter. During the summer, until the snow is all melted, the surface is covered by muddy torrents. When the snow is all melted and the springs begin to freeze, the streams dry up. At the approach of winter, in order to get at the

gold, the miners find it necessary to dig into the gravel formation.

Formerly they stripped the gravel off until they came to the gold. Now they sink a shaft to the bottom of the gravel and tunnel along underneath in the gold-bearing layer. The way in which this is done is interesting, as it has to be carried on in cold weather, when everything is frozen.

The miners build fires over the area where they wish to work, and keep these lighted over that territory for the space of twenty-four hours. Then, at the expiration of this period, the gravel will be melted and softened to a depth of perhaps six inches. This is then taken off, and other fires built until the gold-bearing layer is reached. When the shaft is down that far fires are built at the bottom, against the sides of the layer, and tunnels made in this manner.

Blasting would do no good, on account of the hard nature of the material, and would blow out just as out of a gun. The matter taken out containing the gold is piled up until spring, when the torrents come down, and is panned and cradled by these. It is certainly very hard labour.

Mr. W. Ogilvie, Dominion Land Surveyor, after describing the ordinary process of washing for gold by the pan, the rocker, and the use of mercury, says:—

A great many of the miners spend their time in the summer prospecting, and in the winter resort to a method lately adopted and which is called "burning." They make fires on the surface, thus thawing the ground until the bed rock is reached, then drift and tunnel. The pay dirt is brought to the surface and heaped in a pile until spring, when water can be obtained. The sluice boxes are then set up and the dirt is washed out, thus enabling the miner to work advantageously and profitably the year around. This method has been found very satisfactory in places where the pay streak is at any great depth from the surface. In this way the complaint is overcome which has been so commonly advanced by the miners and others, that in the Yukon several months in the year are lost in idleness. Winter usually sets in very soon after the middle of September and continues until the beginning of June, and is decidedly cold. The mercury frequently falls to 60 degrees below zero; but in the interior there is so little humidity in the atmosphere that the cold is more easily endured than on the coast. In the absence of thermometers, miners, it is said, leave their mercury out all night. When they find it frozen in the morning they conclude that it is too cold to work, and stay at home.

Another miner says:—

The bed rocks are three feet apart. In the lower bed the gold is as black as a black cat, and in the upper bed the gold is as bright as any you ever saw.

No more miners are going to Klondyke this year, and before long we shall hear many sad and terrible tales of the hardships which have been endured by those who have got in and who cannot get out.

The Canadian Government appears to have taken a wise and liberal view of its duties. There has been no attempt to play the part of dog in the manger, nor even to apply to the miners from the United States the same rule as to alien labour as is enforced against Canadians in the Union. There was at one time some talk of levying a royalty of ten or fifteen per cent., but this has been dropped. It remains to be seen whether the proposal to reserve for the Government alternate strips of the auriferous territory can be carried out. The probability is that it will fail. The Canadian authorities in the Klondyke can hardly assert the rights of the State, at least until they are in a better position to fulfil its obligations. The problem is an interesting one. Miners in places as far away as the Klondyke will probably display an ignorant impatience of taxation whenever it is levied in excess of the necessities of meeting the cost of local administration. This would be manifested with equal decision whether the seat of the taxing power were Ottawa, Washington, or St. Petersburg. It is only at Johannesburg that a prosperous mining community allows itself to be fleeced without mercy to fill the coffers of a hostile and alien Government.

From the *New York Herald*.] [July 24, 1897.

WHAT PROFITETH IT?

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